Miscellanea.

CONDITION OF THE CITY SEWERS.—Mr. W. Hayward, the surveyor to the City Sewers Commission, has made a report on the present state of the sewers within their jurisdiction, setting forth that they have been rendered "throughout the whole of the city, entirely free from all deposit which, by its retention and decomposition, might generate injurious vapours. All such inorganic matter, as by its situation or extent might have proved an obstruction to the general flow of the sullage, has also been removed, but there is still much ballast in the sewers, more especially in those lines connecting with the county, it being for the most part the *detritus* from the Macadamized roads, which is constantly coming down during times of rain. I will here state that which, perhaps, is not generally known, viz., that the whole of the gullies in the public streets within the city of London are *trapped*, so that the escape of vitiated air is as much as possible prevented, by the side of the footways, or near to the houses. Most of these gullies have been trapped for many years, although the traps, it is true, are not so perfect in their action as those which modern science has produced. These it will be advisable to replace, as quickly as circumstances will permit, with those of the more approved construction. To your honourable court is due the credit of the introduction of the system of trapping the street gullies, they having been first used by the city fifteen years since, by your then surveyor, Mr. Kelsey. The requisite ventilation of the sewers is still obtained by shafts, which rising from the crowns of the sewers, terminate with open gratings in the centre of the carriage-ways. This mode of ventilation must be admitted to be defective, and bad in principle; in truth, the ventilation of sewers, without great expense, appears to be a difficult problem, which should have the earliest consideration; the existing mode, however (bad as it is), is, I believe, the only one which has been attempted any where within the metropolis; and this much may be said of it, that it allows the escape of the vitiated air as far removed from the line of foot traffic and houses as possible, and in that situation where, obtaining the most uninterrupted current of air, it is most quickly diluted by the atmosphere, and its noxious qualities to that extent negatived. This mode of ventilation was first devised by your former surveyor, Mr. Kelsey, and applied to your sewers about thirteen years ago."

METROPOLITAN STATUE OF SHAKSPEARE.—A correspondent points our attention to an advertisement calling for designs for a metropolitan statue to Shakspeare, to be erected at the west-end of London. He remarks that,—"To all lovers of the works of this great poet, such a tribute would afford gratification, but it is earnestly to be desired that it will not prove a second Nelsonian affair, and that the judges, or those on whom the selection of the best design may devolve, will not be led away by the brilliant colouring and elaborate finishing of any of these productions,—many of which will, no doubt, lay claim to this accomplishment. A very good and highly-finished drawing may make a 'very pretty picture,' but in this case intellect in design should rule the choice, that such a monument may be erected as will be worthy of the great poet, and a lasting honour to the nation." All we can say is, that we know nothing of the matter; but, as a general remark, if artists submit designs without knowing who the parties are that ask for them, and how the tribunal will be composed which is to decide upon their merits, they deserve what they will probably get, namely, their trouble for their pains.

MARYLEBONE SAVINGS' BANK.—At the 19th annual general meeting, held on the 9th inst., it appeared that 2,070 new deposits had been made in the last year. 19,019 deposit accounts remained open on the 20th November last, of which 14,455 held balances averaging less than 3*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.* each. Upwards of 291,386*l.* was then invested with the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt. This amount has since risen to 295,886*l.* The continued evidence thus afforded of the disposition of the working classes to provide against the casualties of life will prove a source of gratification to all reflecting minds.

YIELDING PIERS AND BREAKWATERS.—Mr. W. H. Smith, C.E., has published a description of an invention, the result, as he says, of seven years' study, by means of which he hopes to overcome various obstacles, and ensure the establishment and continuance of available harbours of refuge, piers, breakwaters, &c., on all coasts and in all circumstances. The structure is of timber, supported from the top and the sheeting separately, by yielding braces, so arranged and moored to mooring-blocks, and balanced by counterbalance weights, that pressure in either direction gradually strikes the strain on either the blocks or the weights downwards into or upon the ground, while it also, in reaction, produces a similar strain downwards on the whole structure, which, moreover, is so connected and separated, so jointed and pivoted, as to admit of a horizontal and spiral freedom of motion throughout. All shocks are thus to be either eluded directly or thrown downward on the solid floor of the sea. Yet the power of resistance is said to be sufficient to overcome a momentum on the counter-balance weights and moorings equal to 2,000 tons. Mr. Smith calculates that a harbour, which, on existing principles, would cost 50,000*l.*, will thus be made, by contractors of responsibility, for half as many hundreds.

GALVANIZED IRON.—TODD *v.* GELL.—This was an action tried last week, in the Court of Queen's Bench, in which the declaration alleged that the defendant, by representing to the plaintiff that the defendant had manufactured certain galvanized tin-iron, which was impervious to rain, and would effectually protect the roofs of houses from the effects of wet, had induced the plaintiff to employ the defendant to cover a house of the plaintiff's with that material, and the plaintiff alleged that it had not sufficiently protected the house, and that thereby the wet had got to the roof, and injured the same. The facts appeared to be, that the plaintiff, who had built several houses in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood, had employed the defendant to roof some of them with this material, that the roof of one of them had sustained injury from the wet, and after many small repairings had taken place, the galvanized metal was obliged to be removed, and one of zinc substituted. The plaintiff's witnesses, on cross-examination, expressed their opinion that there was something defective in the roofing itself, or in the way in which the slates had been put on, so that the water came through holes and underneath the galvanized metal. The counsel for the defendant, under these circumstances submitted that the declaration was not supported. Lord Denman being of that opinion, the plaintiff was nonsuited.

SUPPLY OF WATER TO THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS.—The committee appointed by this parish to inquire concerning the means of obtaining a cheaper, better, and more abundant supply of water, have published a report, wherein they state that by means of Artesian wells, "for the sum of 4,068*l.*, (about half the sum now paid by the parishes for the present intermittent, scarce, and impure supply) the two parishes could be provided with an abundance of pure water, laid on at high pressure daily, and throughout the day: the quantity would be unlimited, and would be served by small pipes laid on to the main; it would not be contaminated by standing in cisterns, which constantly require cleansing, but would be as pure as when raised from the bowels of the earth."* They say truly, at the conclusion of their report, "There is no subject fraught with more annoyance to individuals—indeed, to the public generally—than the present ill-contrived and obnoxious method of water-supply to the metropolis. Fairly speaking, water should not be an article of traffic: like air, it should be untaxed, save for machinery necessary to adapt it for public use."

* "At Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, the Artesian well is 290 feet deep: it penetrates into the stratum of flint, and at the surface discharges 100 gallons per minute, and rises with sufficient force, in a tube, to discharge, at 26 feet above the ground, 23 gallons per minute. In Orange-street, the Artesian well descends to 345 feet, and the contract with Government stipulates that, if necessary, 350 gallons per minute shall be supplied to the Palaces of Westminster and Pimlico and the public offices." A correspondent from Hadnam says, "An attempt has been made to make an Artesian well in that neighbourhood, which has failed, the water only flowing within 178 feet of the surface. Will it be practicable or possible to fix a fire-pump in this bore hole, which is only six inches in diameter." Some of your readers will, perhaps, favour us with a few observations upon this."

PROJECTED WORKS.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders, by 3rd March, for the erection of a new chapel near Bolton; by 1st, for erecting a school-house and dwelling-house near Penrith; by 12th, for heating the new asylum at Prestwich; by 20th February, for supplying and fixing gas piping and fittings at the Borough Gaol, Manchester; by a date not specified, for lighting part of Hammersmith parish: and by 7th March, for the valuation of all the rateable property in Tunbridge Wells.

COMPETITION.—A premium of 20*l.* is offered for the best plans for renewing and otherwise improving the interior of the parish church of Bridgewater.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC.—The gutta-percha wire coating, we suggested, might be a perfect tit-bit to some of the fishy tribes, even if the wires themselves defied the sharks. We now observe that it is in the meantime likely to be an acceptable morsel in Chancery, where it has gone in a suit between Mr. Wharton—whose patent for its use dates from 1846—and the Electric Telegraph Company, who, we suppose, have no patent right to use it at all.—Whatever be the insulating merits of gutta percha, however, or whoever may be best entitled to the exclusive benefit of Faraday's experimental genius and discovery, our imperial insular triunity is about to be more closely connected in the mutual bonds of telegraphic fellowship, by the casting of a submarine electric rope across the Irish Channel, from Holyhead to Dublin, whereby that drifting, reckless, weaker vessel of State, poor Ireland, is to be taken a little closer in tow, as a *tender*—we can scarcely call her a *jolly*-boat—along side the Britannia. The Treasury and the Admiralty, it seems, have granted to Mr. C. J. Blunt, C.E., the privilege of laying down this line of telegraph, and a Company is in course of formation for its accomplishment.

COTTAGE FLOORS.—Sir: In several of your late numbers I have noticed some remarks on floors for cottages. Allow me to say I have had the floors of barns laid with a concrete, formed of six parts of clean gravel to one of ground Lias lime, which has answered the purpose well, showing a smooth surface, and being impervious to damp, with the advantage of preventing the approach of vermin, as neither rats or mice can penetrate this material, especially if carried up six or eight inches as skirting. The floor would be sufficient for all purposes in a cottage, if three or four inches thick, which would not take more than half a bushel of lime (value 6d. in London), to the square yard superficial, and where gravel or ballast is cheap, the cost would be very trifling.—T.

GLASS PIPES ON A GREAT SCALE.—New York, it is said, is about to be supplied with the Saratoga water by a company with a capital of 300,000 dollars, who mean to carry it from the springs to the city, as the *Courier and Inquirer* informs us, through a series of glass pipes passing under ground through grooved bricks, the space between the grooves and the bricks to be filled with cement. The expense is estimated at 1,000 dollars per mile, or 180,000 dollars for the entire distance.

THE DISCOVERIES AT ICKLETON AND CHESTERFORD.—The current number of the journal of the British Archæological Association contains an interesting account, by Mr. C. R. Smith, of the foundations of villas, &c., opened at Ickleton and Chesterford, on the borders of Essex and Cambridgeshire, which seem, as the writer shews, to have all the characteristics of Roman work. The remains of the hypocausts are to be seen, painted mural decorations, and fictile vessels in great variety.* According to a report of the proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, given in the current number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, it appears that the Cambridge antiquaries believe these remains belong to a later time. On what ground they arrive at this opinion, we cannot tell: judging simply from the statements and engravings before us, there would seem to be not the slightest doubt that they are correctly described as Roman work.

* The same number of the journal contains "Observations on the practice of embalming among the ancient Egyptians," by Mr. Pettigrew; "On the charge in heraldry called a 'rest,' or 'clarion,'" by Mr. Planché; "On the sepulchral character of cromlechs in the Channel Islands," by Mr. F. C. Lukis, &c., &c.

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